

WARC

Press Release

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Taking control of customer data - WARC Toolkit 2018

Only 22% of brands and 18% of agencies believe they are prepared for GDPR

Global, 15 January 2018 – Managing data more effectively is a key priority for brands in 2018, according to WARC, the global marketing intelligence service, following a survey with 600 plus marketing and advertising professionals around the world for its Toolkit 2018 report.

Brands will need to take a more disciplined, proactive approach to data management. The upcoming European Union's General Data Protection (GDPR), which comes into effect on 25 May 2018, is likely to have a profound impact on the ways in which businesses store and use consumer data. Under GDPR, any company – no matter where they are based or headquartered – holding information about European Union citizens will be subject to strict new legislation around the use of personal data.

Ominously, the Toolkit 2018 survey reveals an industry largely unprepared for the new ways of working under GDPR. At a global level, only a small minority of respondents – 22% of brands and 18% of agencies – say they are ready for the change.

Ardi Kolah, Executive Fellow and Programme Director, GDPR Transition Programme, Henley Business School, advises: "Take a step back, and think what this is really about: this is about reputation, not regulation. It's about doing the right thing. This is all about protecting reputation."

In addition to the new regulations coming into force, there is a broader push by brands to take control of their many data sources to improve customer experience and introduce new marketing approaches.

For example, data will be key to delivering the 'mass one-to-one marketing', which will fuel the next wave of digital growth, according to Marc Pritchard, Procter & Gamble's Chief Brand Officer. He comments: "Looking ahead, this new transition to one-to-one marketing is going to be a big shift. It will move into data management, and we need to think through what are the data standards and what are the ways we operate."

Verity Gill, Digital Director, Ebiquity, added: "Until now the challenge with big data has been simply coping with its sheer volume. However, now that we are getting to grips with building storage and

manipulation capabilities, our attention in 2018 will definitely turn to making data work harder for us. Perhaps 2018 will be the year of 'Data Effectiveness'."

Other key findings from WARC's Toolkit survey show that:

- 55% of brands and 59% of agencies will be prioritising an increased focus on drawing insights from 'big data'
- In Europe, only 25% of the Toolkit 2018 survey respondents agree they are ready for GDPR. For the rest of the world, only 12% say they are ready, despite the fact that all companies with EU consumers will be affected

Taking control of customer data is one of five key brand concern in the year ahead, outlined in Toolkit 2018, which also includes a guide to best practice, potential pitfalls and video interviews with industry leaders to help overcome the challenges.

For more information and insights on Toolkit 2018, visit [here](#)

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